LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (previously presented) A method for managing a streaming media service, said method comprising:

receiving a request for a streaming media service from a client, said streaming media service comprising a media service component;

selecting a service location manager to which to provide said request from a plurality of service location managers, said service location manager configured for selecting a service provider from a plurality of service providers;

selecting said service provider to which to assign said media service component from a plurality of service providers of a network;

informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said media service component, causing said service provider to prepare to perform said streaming media service on streaming media;

using information to determine whether to initiate a handoff of said streaming media service from said service provider to another service provider; and

if it is determined to initiate said handoff, initiating said handoff.

Claims 2-35 (canceled)

36. (previously presented) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information received from said service providers and information associated with location and priority of said service providers.

37. (previously presented) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information received from any client device that is involved in said streaming media service.

38. (previously presented) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein said information comprises information associated with network conditions.

39. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises:

maintaining a record comprising identifying information for a set of service location managers among said plurality of service location managers; and

selecting said service location manager in a round robin manner from said record.

40. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises a comparison of available resources of a first set of service providers supervised by a first service location manager and available resources of a second set of service providers supervised by a second service location manager.

41. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager comprises a comparison of processing loads of at least two service location managers among said plurality of service location managers.

42. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service location manager is based on an estimate of a network communication condition between two entities connected by the network.

43. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:

notifying a second service location manager among said plurality of service location managers of the assignment of said service provider to perform said media service component.

44. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said service provider is supervised by more than one service location manager among said plurality of service location managers.

45. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 44, further comprising:

maintaining a record comprising identifying information of a set of service location managers among said plurality of service location managers, each service location manager of said set of service location managers supervising said service provider; and

notifying said set of service location managers according to said record of said assignment of said service provider to perform said media service component.

46. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving resource availability information from said plurality of service providers,

wherein said information is ascertained from ongoing resource measurements; and

said selecting said service provider based on said resource availability information.

47. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 46, wherein said resource

availability information is pushed from said plurality of service providers.

48. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 46, wherein said receiving

resource availability information occurs in response to polling of said service providers.

49. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting

said service provider is based on static service provider information or static network

information.

50. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 49, wherein said static

service provider information or static network information consists of at least one of the

following: information concerning computational and memory resources, connectivity and

expected bandwidth and latency between servers, client and content addresses, session dispatch

history, and network proximity.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said selecting said service

provider comprises:

maintaining a record comprising assignments of service providers to perform media service components; and

said selecting said service provider based on said record.

52. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said selecting said service provider comprises:

maintaining a record comprising assignments of service providers to perform media service components;

receiving resource availability information from said plurality of service providers, wherein said information is ascertained from ongoing resource measurements; and

said selecting said service provider based on said resource availability information and said record.

53. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 1, wherein said selecting said service provider is based on an estimate of resources associated with performing said service.

54. (previously presented) A computer-readable medium comprising computer-executable instructions stored therein for implementing a method for managing a streaming media service, said method comprising:

receiving a request for a streaming media service from a client, said streaming media service comprising a media service component;

selecting a service location manager to which to provide said request from a plurality of

service location managers, said service location manager configured for selecting a service

provider from a plurality of service providers;

selecting said service provider to which to assign said media service component from a

plurality of service providers of a network;

informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said media service

component, causing said service provider to prepare to perform said streaming media service on

streaming media; and

using information to determine whether to initiate a handoff of said streaming media

service from said service provider to another service provider.

55. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 54, wherein said

information comprises information received from said plurality of service providers and

information associated with location and priority of service providers.

56. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 54, wherein said

information comprises information received from any client device that is involved in said

streaming media service.

57. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 54, wherein said

method further comprising:

notifying a second service location manager among said plurality of service location

managers of the assignment of said service provider to perform said media service component.

58. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 57, wherein said notifying is performed by said service provider or said service location manager.

59. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 54, wherein said method further comprising:

receiving resource availability information from said plurality of service providers, wherein said information is ascertained from ongoing resource measurements; and

said selecting said service provider based on said resource availability information.

60. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium of Claim 59, wherein said resource availability information is poll-based information or push-based information.

61. (previously presented) A system for providing streaming content to a client device, said system comprising:

a plurality of service location managers, each service location manager capable of managing a handoff of a service based on information received;

a plurality of service providers, each service provider capable of performing said service on an item of streaming input content to produce said streaming content; and

a portal providing a first point of contact for said client device, said portal for receiving from said client device a request for performance of said service on said item of streaming input content, said portal for selecting a service location manager to which to provide said request from said plurality of service location managers, said service location manager for receiving said

request from said portal and for selecting a service provider from said plurality of service providers and informing said service provider of said assignment to perform said service on said streaming input content to produce said streaming content, wherein said service location manager uses information to determine whether to initiate a handoff of said service from said service provider to another service provider.

62. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said information includes information received from said service providers.

63. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said information includes information received from said client device.

64. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said information includes information associated with network conditions.

65. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said portal maintains a record comprising a prioritized listing of at least one service location manager among said plurality of service location managers and selects said service location manager in order of priority according to said prioritized listing.

66. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said portal selects said service location manager by comparing available resources of a first set of service providers

supervised by said service location manager and available resources of a second set of service providers supervised by a second service location manager.

67. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said portal selects said service location manager based on an estimate of a network communication condition between two entities connected by the network.

68. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service provider or said service location manager notifies a second service location manager among said plurality of service location managers of said assignment of said service provider to perform said service.

69. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said portal activates a second service location manager of said plurality of service location managers to perform the operation of said service location manager, provided said portal determines said service location manager to be non-responsive.

70. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service provider is supervised by more than one service location manager of said plurality of service location managers.

71. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service provider is supervised by a first service location manager, and wherein said first service location manager transfers supervision of said service provider to a second service location manager.

72. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service location manager receives resource availability information from said plurality of service providers, and wherein said selecting said service provider is based on said resource availability information.

73. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service location manager maintains a record comprising assignments of service providers to perform services, and wherein said selecting said service provider is based on said record.

74. (previously presented) The system of Claim 61, wherein said service location manager selects said service provider based on static service provider information or static network information.